

# S O P D



Senior Officer Professional Digest

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

This month the Editors of the *Senior Officer Professional Digest* recommend ten articles drawn from professional and academic journals on the subjects of US defence reform, autocratic revival, cyberwar, Adaptive Campaigning, strategic communications, inter-agency operations, Afghan history and East Asian strategic calculus.

The US Secretary of Defense, Robert M Gates, is recommended first in this month's edition of the *SOPD*. In his article, he sketches out his defence reform agenda, and his views are complimented by those of a distinguished outside observer—Ashton B Carter. Continuing in this spirit of presenting all views, this month the Editors recommend several other articles presenting differing or divergent arguments to those recommended in previous editions of the *Digest*: specifically Daniel Deudney and G John Ikenberry's article refuting the notion that autocracy will rise again, and Stephen W Korn's article criticising the utility of military 'botnets'.

For the Australian Army, however, the time for debate over broad conceptual direction has ended, and all officers must shift their focus to implementing the many changes arising from the Adaptive Army initiative and the Adaptive Campaigning concept. In this light, senior officers will find Aaron P Jackson's work on Adaptive Campaigning of some interest; David Betz's and Kenneth Payne's articles on strategic narrative and strategic communications will prove interesting for similar reasons. In the same vein, John A Nagl's piece on inter-agency cooperation in stabilisation operations, and Barnett R Rubin's article on the history of Afghanistan's various factional leaders will help officers inform their debates on the various lines of operation these works touch on.

Finally, in light of the more traditional strategic interests of which senior officers must always be cognisant, the Editors recommend Hugh White's excellent strategic survey of East and South-East Asian security issues.

Enjoy  
The Editors

Robert M Gates, 'A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for A New Age', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Iss. 1, January–February 2009, pp. 28–40, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20090101faessay88103/robert-m-gates/how-to-reprogram-the-pentagon.html>>.

The International Coalition Against Terror has been fighting hard since it first ousted the Taliban from Kabul in 2001. However, during this long conflict, success has often been difficult to come by, and 'victory', however defined, still requires much effort to achieve. A critical part of this further effort will be the rationalisation of the United States' expensive war effort. George W Bush's last Secretary of Defense, Robert M Gates, has agreed to remain as Secretary and assist President Barack Obama prosecute the Long War. With the change of President will come a change of priorities, and while Gates has been expressly directed to 'keep the momentum' in Afghanistan and Iraq, he sees new challenges emerging for US counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts. This article, published in *Foreign Affairs*, presents Gates's vision for the future of US military efforts. For senior officers it represents a perfect opportunity to hear directly from the Secretary on his broad priorities for the US Department of Defense. As Adaptive Campaigning takes the Army in new directions regarding concepts, doctrine, training and equipment, it is an important time to take stock of where Australia's most important ally is likely to head.

Overwhelmingly, Gates's main argument is that his department must become more flexible and adaptive. He argues that the United States must make a major shift away from its still overwhelming focus on future, conventional conflicts and redirect some attention, resources and intellectual capacity to address the needs arising from the nation's current wars. To this end, he hopes to construct a more responsive acquisitions and equipment program, which will provide '75 percent solutions over a period of months' as opposed to the current system which gives US forces a '99 percent solution over a period of years.' He also writes that he will continue to advocate career structure changes, funding priorities and new promotion paths so that COIN skills will become embedded in the mainstream of the US armed forces.

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**'For every heroic and resourceful innovation by troops and commanders on the battlefield, there was some institutional shortcoming at the Pentagon they had to overcome.'**

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Gates remains convinced that the US must continue to prepare for conventional and nuclear war, but he is adamant throughout his work that such preparation must not be at the expense of irregular warfighting skills and equipment. Just as the senior leadership of the Australian Army has long maintained that war remains a human affair, so too does Secretary Gates—senior officers will be heartened to see the evident determination he has to ensure that the US armed forces will remember this fact, too.

*Robert M Gates is President Barack Obama's Secretary for Defense. He also held this position for several years under President George W Bush.*

**Ashton B Carter, 'Defense Management Challenges for the Next American President', *Orbis*, Vol. 53, Iss. 1, Winter 2009, pp. 41–53, <[http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Orbis2\\_090128.pdf](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Orbis2_090128.pdf)>.**

While it contains no groundbreaking new arguments or concerted challenges to conventional wisdom, Ashton B Carter's article is nonetheless an important work for senior officers to consider as it makes several calls for major action within the US Department of Defence. More importantly, these calls have come from a former Democrat-administration official with senior defence policy experience. Accordingly, unlike the majority of other articles that have attended the inauguration of President Barack Obama, this one has some credibility as an indicator of what will likely occur in the US Department of Defense over the coming months and years.

Carter forms his recommendations into five major goals which he argues US armed forces must meet under the new leadership of President Obama. Mirroring Secretary Gates's calls for a leaner, more efficient acquisition architecture, Carter maintains that the US Department of Defense must return to 'the practice of matching strategy and resources'. This is a skill he fears that the department has lost amid massive budget growth, a climate of large supplementary appropriations and a race to 'keep up' with operations which has ensured that many new, temporary or ad-hoc programs have been funded on unsustainable bases. Carter insists that as the Federal Government tightens its belt to address the global economic crisis, the Department of Defense must begin to accept and apportion risk among its missions, focusing on contemporary operations as a priority and devolving risk to conventional weapons systems and other less-pressing demands.

In his inaugural induction address to Army Headquarters, the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, asserted that the Army's support organisations must operate with 'Kingswood tastes' so that the frontline soldier can receive 'Rolls Royce kit'. Similar sentiments have been expressed by Secretary Gates, and Ashton Carter's article outlines in broad strokes how this agenda can be advanced. Accordingly, senior officers and headquarters staff will find this article of some interest.

*Ashton B Carter is Chair of the International and Global Affairs Faculty at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He served as President Clinton's Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy from 1993 to 1996.*

**Daniel Deudney and G John Ikenberry, 'The Myth of the Autocratic Revival: Why Liberal Democracy Will Prevail', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Iss. 1, January–February 2009, pp. 77–93.**

It was once conventional wisdom that liberal democracy and capitalism went hand in hand, and that one could not exist without the other. However, the Editors of the *SOPD* have recommended several articles in the past outlining 'Russia's resurgence' and 'China's rise' which suggest that capitalism and authoritarianism are equally comfortable partners, even in today's globalised world. Readers of the *Digest* will recall that in Issue 52, the Editors recommended 'The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers' by the prominent strategist and

theorist Azar Gat. In the latest edition of *Foreign Affairs*, Daniel Deudney and the renowned international relations theorist G John Ikenberry have made their reply to Gat, adding a new dimension to this important debate.

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**'Liberal states should not assume that history has ended, but they can still be certain that it is on their side.'**

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While it would not dignify the article to summarise it briefly here, Deudney and Ikenberry's rebuttal centres on what they believe is a mischaracterisation of some of the indicators of the global political situation upon which Gat's argument relies. For example, while Gat argues that China's high level of economic growth coupled with a lack of internal democratic agitation disproves the 'middle class equals democracy' argument, Deudney and Ikenberry posit that, due to the large imbalance in the distribution of wealth in China, only now is a Chinese middle class forming. Accordingly, while Gat maintained that Chinese democrats had 'missed the boat' and that liberal democracies should align against these threatening powers, Deudney and Ikenberry recommend that the Western world should encourage democracy from afar, remain inclusive and ultimately 'wait and see' – history, they argue, is on the liberal world's side.

Senior officers, strategists and policy-makers all have vested interests in the successful integration of China and Russia into the liberal international economic and political system. Indeed, the distinguished Australian strategist Hugh White has long argued that this is the single most critical issue for Australia's long-term security. Accordingly, Australian decision-makers will find the current debate among such prominent intellectuals of considerable interest, and Gat, Deudney and Ikenberry certainly rate as leaders in their field.

*Daniel Deudney is Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University. His latest book is Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village. G John Ikenberry is Albert G Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. His latest book is After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars.*

**Stephen W Korns, 'Botnets outmaneuvered', *Armed Forces Journal*, January 2009, <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/01/3801084/>>.**

Regular readers of the *SOPD* will recall that in Issue 61, the Editors recommended an article by Colonel Charles M Williamson III of the US Air Force, entitled 'Carpet bombing in cyberspace'. The concept has obviously piqued the interest of the US Officer Corps as well, and Stephen W Korns' article, 'Botnets outmaneuvered', is a considered rebuttal of Williamson's original concept.

Essentially, Williamson argued that the United States should assemble a 'botnet' – a group of computers automatically assembled to flood an enemy computer with network traffic thereby 'jamming' its communication with the network. This would provide the United States with an offensive response option in cyberwar. Korns argues that this idea, while

technically feasible, is largely impotent because an opponent targeted with such an attack—referred to as ‘Distributed Denial of Service’ (DDoS)—can manoeuvre its information away from the targeted infrastructure thereby negating its effect. Korn’s cites Georgia’s recent cybermanoeuvre against Russia as an example. As Russian tanks were pushing deep into Georgia, hackers were arranging DDoS attacks against Georgian Government websites and data communications means. In response, Georgia quickly re-hosted its websites and other critical material on commercial Google and TSHost servers. This allowed the Georgian Government to make use of Google and TSHost’s massive traffic capacity which simply swallowed up the botnet attacks.

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**‘Contrary to Williamson’s assertion, Georgia’s ability to outmaneuver a DDoS attack shows that botnets are not a valid cyberdeterrent model.’**

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Korn’s idea is convincing, and certainly warrants the attention of senior officers. However, further debate is required to address important issues regarding cybermanoeuvre—for example, the feasibility of hosting classified or sensitive information on commercial servers, or the lack of mobility that attends the massive

data quantities characteristic of large organisations like the Department of Defence. Accordingly, Korn’s article, taken together with Williamson’s original piece, will provide senior officers not with definitive answers, but rather a series of ‘jumping off points’ for their own debates on this increasingly important new medium of warfare.

*Colonel Stephen W Korn is Vice Director of Strategy, Plans, Policy and International Relations at the Joint Task Force–Global Network Operations. He is primarily tasked with the development of policy and plans for the US Department of Defense’s Global Information Grid.*

**Aaron P Jackson, ‘Moving Beyond Manoeuvre: A Conceptual Coming-of-Age for the Australian and Canadian Armies’, *Australian Defence Force Journal*, Iss. 177, 2008, pp. 85–100, <[http://www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au/UserFiles/issues/177%202008%20Nov Dec.pdf](http://www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au/UserFiles/issues/177%202008%20Nov%20Dec.pdf)>.**

Senior officers are obviously familiar with both *Complex Warfighting* and *Adaptive Campaigning*, but they are less likely to be as familiar with Canada’s *Force Employment Concept* and *Adaptive Dispersed Operations*. These documents, released at approximately the same time as both of the Australian concepts, reflect the similarities between the two forces and their largely shared operational experience. Aaron P Jackson’s article offers senior officers a comparative look at the two forces’ future concepts, their similarities and differences, and the effect they are having today.

Jackson argues that critical to the development of these concepts was the United States’ failure to rapidly adapt to the operational realities of Afghanistan and Iraq—essentially, without a guiding concept from the United States, Australia and Canada had no choice but to develop their own ideas and adapt to twenty-first century warfare by themselves. Jackson also points out how, despite the significant differences between their experience, both armies drew very similar lessons from their own operations prior to Afghanistan. Of course,

operations in Afghanistan heavily influenced both armies, but in subtly different ways, which Jackson also touches on.

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**‘These developments are significant because they represent a substantial break with tradition ... recent developments indicate a more proactive and genuinely innovative approach to overcoming operational challenges.’**

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The results of these comprehensive studies have been well received in their respective armies and among their major allies. Indeed, Jackson quotes an International Institute for Strategic Studies report which argues that the United States has been so impressed with Australia’s conceptual innovations that ‘large portions of the new US future land warfighting concept appear to have been drawn directly from the Australian *Complex*

*Warfighting* doctrine.’ Jackson is quick to point out the many benefits in interoperability that will no doubt stem from this similarity. Senior officers will find this an interesting article as it provides them with a way to update quickly their understanding of our close friend Canada’s own conceptual innovations with regard to Australia’s own.

*Major Aaron P Jackson (Ares) holds Bachelors degrees in Business Economics and Government, and International Studies from Flinders University, where he today is undertaking his PhD studies.*

### **David Betz, ‘The virtual dimension of contemporary insurgency and counterinsurgency’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol. 19, Iss. 4, pp. 510–40.**

This article, by David Betz, is a first-rate work worthy of every senior officer’s time. As its title suggests, it focuses on the all-important battle of ‘the narratives’ waged between the insurgent and counterinsurgent. For the Australian Army, managing this critical perceptual battle will become increasingly important. Indeed, as the latest draft of *Adaptive Campaigning 09* states, ‘future conflicts will increasingly be decided in the minds of a population rather than on the battlefield alone.’ Fortunately, David Betz’s article provides senior officers with an excellent opportunity to come to grips with this difficult topic.

Betz’s paper identifies the main reasons behind the ongoing failure of Coalition information operations against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, arguing that the Coalition—on the rare occasions that it focuses on this critical battle—usually misunderstands the environment in which it is operating. Furthermore, Betz points out that these information actions are often directed at issues that the Coalition has little hope of influencing. Betz calls for a complete overhaul of this approach, and in support of his point, offers what is likely one of the best overviews of this topic to appear in the literature. His analysis is well presented, his arguments telling, and his thoughts insightful.

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**‘[T]he West is faltering in the ‘War of Ideas’ with global Jihad for the main reason that the messages we wish to convey lack narrative coherence ... There is no reason, beyond inertia, that this should remain the case.’**

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For the Australian Army, Betz's ideas are of particular relevance. During a recent address to Army Headquarters, the Deputy Chief of Army, Major General Paul Symon remarked that 'alignment' between senior officers in the Army was critical to protecting the reputation of the organisation in the media, and hence in the eyes of the public. Betz's work proves that this sort of alignment is also critical to a successful narrative when critical host-populace 'hearts and minds' are at stake. Accordingly, senior officers would do well to read this brilliant article and dwell on how the 'war of ideas' is waged in a very real sense on the home front, and not just 'over there'.

*David Betz is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of War Studies, King's College, London.*

**Kenneth Payne, 'Winning the Battle of Ideas: Propaganda, Ideology and Terror', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 32, Iss. 2, pp. 109–128.**

Elsewhere within this edition of the *SOPD*, the Editors have recommended David Betz's excellent article on strategic narratives. This article, by Kenneth Payne, offers a similarly insightful view of the topic, focusing on the United Kingdom's attempts to disseminate anti-Al Qaeda 'propaganda' on the home front. This case-study offers a complimentary view of the topic of strategic communications to Betz, and as such, the Editors recommend that they be read together.

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**'The propagandist then ... should strive to be factually accurate. But that is only the beginning. More properly, she or he should strive to construct a factually accurate narrative.'**

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Payne's article examines the various ideas and theories of propaganda guiding the UK's domestic campaign, and compares it with al-Qaeda's approach to its own propaganda. Payne demonstrates that, while they remain the basis of strategic communications, facts must be woven into a telling narrative if they are to have any effect on the target audience. Perception trumps

accuracy, and storytelling, in this sense, becomes just as important as being factually accurate. Payne then goes on to examine the legal and moral implications for liberal democratic governments who must tread this minefield. While risky, Payne concludes quite convincingly that propaganda is a tool that liberal democratic governments can conscientiously use.

Examining the propaganda of al-Qaeda, the author determines that, while far more successful in goading some into extreme action, al-Qaeda's propaganda campaign must be considered unsuccessful overall, for it has resolutely failed to engage the vast majority of the Muslim world. On the other hand, while it has not discredited Islamic extremism among critical groups, Britain's strategic communications program has been, with some exceptions, largely successful at home, but still faces significant hurdles of credibility with foreign audiences. Because of this, Payne concludes that the 'War of Ideas' is at a standstill, with some major shift required if there is to be significant progress by either side. As Adaptive Campaigning comes closer to becoming doctrine, narrative projection as strategic communication will become increasingly important for the Army's senior leadership.

Payne's article gives senior officers a chance to see these issues at play, in the real world, and determine the best way for Australian forces to learn from these experiences, to adapt accordingly and ultimately to overcome its enemies.

*Kenneth Payne is a former news producer with the BBC. Today, he is a Teaching Fellow at the Defence Studies Department of King's College London and a Visiting Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford.*

**John A Nagl, 'The expeditionary imperative', *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 33, Iss. 1, Winter 2009, pp. 55–58,**

**<[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay\\_id=501753](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=501753)>.**

Of the five lines of operation mentioned in *Adaptive Campaigning*, perhaps the most difficult for the Australian Army to accommodate will be 'capacity building'. Not only will this require additional planning, management and engineering expertise not already in the Army, it will also necessitate the close coordination of many different government and even non-government organisations lest one fail to deliver on its promises and damage the entire campaign. In this mélange of reconstruction, judicial reform, police training and political development it is easy to see why the Army will continue to face difficulties in this critical mission. John A Nagl's article deals with practical proposals to confront precisely these issues, and is therefore worthy of the senior officer's time.

Nagl's reflections on his time as an armoured battlegroup commander in Iraq have led him to believe that it is only with other government agencies that a military force can hope to succeed in capacity building. During his time in Iraq, he concedes that he and his peers performed badly.

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**'[T]he colonels on the ground deserve the political and economic advice they need to make better decisions than I did.'**

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This was because, while they had been trained well to 'coordinate close air support, artillery strikes, and tank and machine-gun fire', they were unfortunately 'left on [their] own in determining how to coordinate economic development in Anbar.' Nagl argues that military force will continue to be necessary in COIN, and that as such, military officers should continue to specialise in its application. They should not be retrained to become experts in construction, the judiciary or agriculture. Rather, the expertise abundant within other government departments should be tapped to advise the military commander, who will then coordinate all of these various measures with the constant imperative of population protection. To have this expertise on hand, Nagl argues that the military should lead the way in fostering an 'expeditionary imperative' among other government agencies, and points toward former-President George W Bush's Civilian Response Corps as an excellent starting point.

In Australia, like in the United States, much of the Federal Government is not comfortable with the idea of sending their personnel to help the military overseas. However, we have made much more progress towards this goal to date than many other countries—the Australian Federal Police are leading the way with their International Deployment Group, and DFAT has considerable experience with the Solomon Islands mission. However, there is

much more to be done, and it seems likely that it will be the responsibility of the ADF—the only true expeditionary organisation in government—to lead the way. The Army’s senior officers will therefore find this article of interest as a piece from which they can begin their own thinking on what will likely be one of the more difficult issues arising from the implementation of Adaptive Campaigning.

*Colonel John A Nagl (Ret) is a Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and was one of the co-authors of the new US Army and US Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual.*

**Barnett R Rubin, ‘A Tribe Apart’, *Boston Review*, Vol. 34, Iss. 1, January–February 2009, <<http://bostonreview.net/BR34.1/rubin.php>>.**

Understanding the social and political history of a country is critical to understanding its present situation. While the history of Afghanistan is well understood by many officers in the Army, seeing it from new and possibly challenging angles is critical to testing and validating one’s conception of this crucial topic. The author of this article, Barnett R Rubin, is certainly challenging the Coalition’s approach—he has been labelled as ‘the voice of doom’ by one British diplomat, and condemned as biased by one US official. However, intellectual rigour demands that opposition arguments be heard, and for the complex tasks in which the ADF is today engaged, senior officers must look to all schools of thought as never before.

Fortunately, Rubin’s article is a compellingly written piece. The author covers a wide swathe of Afghanistan’s history through a series of small stories cleverly woven together to provide a unique, personal perspective of this country’s history. Unlike similarly styled works, Rubin largely avoids the pitfall of tunnel-vision by focusing on the stories of the critical decision-makers rather than those ‘in the trenches’. While Rubin’s style can therefore sometimes verge on the emotive, it does engage the reader and force them to contemplate the sometimes deeply personal forces at play in Afghanistan’s politics.

But therein also lies the strength of this article. Unlike many other articles which approach the socio-political history of Afghanistan from a political science or strategic studies viewpoint, Rubin challenges senior leaders to see beyond the theory. His work points out the day-to-day realities of the lives of these historical figures, their loyalties and sometimes their crimes. Such

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**‘Since 2002, I have often ... express[ed] concern that the international project in Afghanistan is out of touch with local realities, sometimes disastrously so.’**

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focus is critical when one considers that it is these same figures who have stamped their point of view on Afghanistan and shaped it into what it is today. This article cannot hope to be entirely objective given this kind of material, and as a guide for policy measures it is arguably of little value. However, as a challenge to ‘accepted wisdom’ for those senior officers who are often called on to become involved in the deeply human affairs of ‘hearts and minds’ and Afghan political progress, this article is excellent.

*Barnett R Rubin is Director of Studies and Senior Fellow at the Center on International Cooperation at New York University, where he directs the Afghanistan Reconstruction Project.*

**Hugh White, 'Why War in Asia Remains Thinkable', *Survival*, Vol. 50, Iss. 6, pp. 85–104.**

Despite the end of the Cold War and the increasing momentum of globalisation, states remain the most important actors on the world stage today, and conflict between them remains entirely possible. Within Australia's broader region, the populous nations of Asia are emerging into the global middle class, and with their increased wealth comes increased interests and increased military power. The potential for war, therefore, remains within the realms of possibility as more powerful Asian states become more confident and more interventionist. Indeed—as Hugh White argues—if left untended, affairs between China, Japan and the United States are more likely to deteriorate than improve.

White's argument that Asia's future remains uncertain centres on the proposition that the peace enjoyed by the region for the past thirty years may not endure as circumstances begin to change. This is because, as China's power relative to the United States' grows, Washington's ability to effect what White characterises as 'double-reassurance' diminishes commensurately. The idea of double-

reassurance—the notion that the United States guarantees China's security from Japan and Japan's security from China—neatly sums up the net-effect of the various security architectures that characterise the region. White posits that as the United States' ability to conduct double-reassurance erodes, the region will again become liable to serious conflict.

White's arguments are elegant, and his reasoning sound. His conclusions regarding the centrality of Japan to regional stability, while not groundbreaking, are made with an eloquence that conveys to the reader the argument—in its full complexity—with surprising simplicity. For senior officers, this particularly thoughtful evaluation of the regional strategic calculus will enable them to keep up-to-date on an evolving state of affairs—an important consideration given the attention that more pressing day-to-day demands can have on their time.

*Hugh White is a former Deputy Secretary for Strategy at the Department of Defence. In this capacity, he had a leading role in formulating the Defence 2000 White Paper. Today, he is Emeritus Professor of Strategy at the Australian National University and a Visiting Fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy.*

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**'Whether one is optimistic that the order of recent decades will be sustained, or pessimistic that it may collapse, depends in part on how one explains the recent decades of peace.'**

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